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# COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

## How KEES affects middle school students

by Becky Gilpatrick, KEES Program Coordinator

Doesn't it seem like time keeps passing by faster and faster? As summer break rounds the corner, it will soon be time for Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) reporting again. Although students do not earn monetary awards until the end of their ninth grade, information such as name, address, Social Security number and birth date are reported for students completing the eighth grade. This information is used to mail a KEES brochure to the parents of each student to introduce each family to the program as students begin their high school years.

There are a few things that middle school counselors and administrators can do to assist KHEAA with this information-sharing process.

### ✓ Verify each eighth-grader's Social Security number and birth date.

Social Security number and birth date are the two main identifiers for student records. When student records arrive at KHEAA each summer, these two pieces of information tell our database where to place the new information in order to join it with records that have been submitted for the student in previous years. Although eighth-grade records are the first information reported for many students, an incorrect SSN and/or birth date could cause problems when the student's high school records are submitted. Oddly enough, KHEAA finds more SSN and birth date discrepancies between the eighth and ninth grade than in any other years. Many of these discrepancies are from middle and high schools within the same district.

If your students' SSNs have not been checked since they initially entered your school district, you may want to request they bring in proof, such as their Social Security card.

### ✓ Double check mailing addresses for your students.

Roughly 10% to 20% of the addresses reported for KEES each year are incorrect, resulting in returned mail. With a quarter of a million records received each year statewide, you can get a picture of how much returned mail KHEAA receives. Over a third are for eighth-graders. By checking each student's mailing address, you are not only helping the state save postage costs but also helping ensure your students receive their KEES brochures encouraging them to work harder to make good grades in high school.

If you have questions or comments related to the KEES program, feel free to contact Becky Gilpatrick at [rgilpatrick@kheaa.com](mailto:rgilpatrick@kheaa.com) or 800.928.8926, ext. 7394.

## Report details Outreach activities for FY2005

Included with this issue of the *Counselor Connection* is the Outreach Report for FY2005. This report includes information about the outreach counselors and a detailed breakdown of contacts made by our outreach staff.

The outreach area includes nine regional counselors who cover Kentucky. KHEAA and The Student Loan People also have the College Info Road Show, which visits schools and other sites.

If you would like to schedule a visit from the outreach staff, please call Summer Gortney at 502.696.7377.





## Best in Class

Counselors who are repaying student loans may be able to take advantage of the Best in Class benefits offered by The Student Loan People. Teachers and school librarians may also have the same opportunity.

Best in Class is a program designed to help teachers, counselors and librarians working in certified Kentucky schools save money on their student loans. It's a well-deserved thank you to those people for dedicating themselves to Kentucky's future—its students.

If you're a member of a federally recognized minority, you may also be eligible for forgiveness of the principal on your loan, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year. The loan forgiveness is also available to teachers of math, science, foreign language and English as a second language. In addition to the principal benefit, the interest is forgiven each year as well.

To qualify for Best in Class benefits, you must have a student loan from The Student Loan People. And the student loan doesn't have to be a Federal Stafford Loan you took out for your own education; it can be a Federal PLUS Loan you took out to help pay for your child's education.

If you think you qualify, visit [studentloanpeople.com](http://studentloanpeople.com) and click on the Best in Class icon. You'll find out more about the program, and there'll be a link to an application.

The Student Loan People make no representation, offer or promise to be relied upon about continued availability of loan benefits; or about the accuracy or completeness of this printed information. Benefits may change or be cancelled without notice, at any time, by operation of applicable laws or by The Student Loan People, for any reason at its sole discretion. Contact The Student Loan People each year that you expect to receive benefits to verify eligibility for and availability of the loan benefits/programs. Contact a tax advisor about tax consequences of loan benefits.



## Please share this info

KHEAA and The Student Loan People offer a variety of college planning and student financial aid programs and services for Kentucky students. We want everyone to be aware of how we can help families plan and pay for higher education and are asking you to share information and articles from this newsletter with those in your school or office responsible for newsletters to parents, school newspapers, and other communications. We appreciate your help in spreading the word.

## Time to clean house

As the end of the school year draws near, now may be a great time to discard any old publications from KHEAA and The Student Loan People. We will be reprinting new materials over the summer with the most current and up-to-date information and will send a supply to you after the beginning of the 2006–2007 academic year. If you are not sure which publications may be outdated, please call us at 502.696.7381 or e-mail us at [publications@kheaa.com](mailto:publications@kheaa.com).

KHEAA and The Student Loan People publish the *Counselor Connection* to share information about student financial aid, college preparation and college planning. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please send them to [publications@kheaa.com](mailto:publications@kheaa.com).

